

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 DRC-01 EB-11 COME-00

SCI-06 IO-14 /162 W

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R 301017Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1438

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION BERLIN

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AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 05160

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GW, UR, GE
SUBJECT: FRG'S OSTPOLITIK IN EARLY 1974: SOME PROGRESS,
BUT PROBLEM AREAS REMAIN

1. SUMMARY: WEST GERMANY'S OSTPOLITIK HAS AGAIN BEEN MAKING HEADLINES RECENTLY, WHAT WITH BAHR'S TEN-DAY VISIT TO MOSCOW, SCHEEL'S VISIT TO SOFIA AND FORTHCOMING ONE TO BUDAPEST, AND THE FRG-GDR AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH PERMANENT MISSIONS. ALSO OF NOTE WAS THE CONCLUSION OF THE FRG-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE KURSK STEEL COMPLEX. BUT, DESPITE THESE SIGNS OF PROGRESS, SERIOUS PROBLEMS PERSIST AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO DISAPPEAR EASILY. WHILE THE SOVIETS AND EE'S WANT THE BENEFITS OF THE FRG'S ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL POWER, THEY DO NOT APPEAR WILLING TO PAY MUCH IN RETURN. THEY SEEM TO HOPE THAT THE BONN GOVERNMENT, FOR DOMESTIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND FOREIGN POLICY REASONS, WILL PAY THE EAST HANDSOMELY FOR MINIMAL CONCESSIONS. IF INDEED THEY MAKE THIS ASSESSMENT, THE EAST EUROPEANS ARE OVERLOOKING THE FACT THAT OSTPOLITIK IS NO LONGER REGARDED AS A SUCCESS BY THE GERMAN PUBLIC, AND THERE ARE INCREASINGLY LOUD VOICES ASKING WHY THE FRG SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS AND GET SO LITTLE IN RETURN. FRG CONDUCT OF EASTERN POLICY MAY BE QUITE CAUTIOUS IN THE PERIOD AHEAD, PARTICULARLY TO AVOID GIVING THE OPPOSITION THE PRETEXT TO ACCUSE THE GOVERNMENT OF PUSHING OSTPOLITIK AT A TIME WHEN WESTPOLITIK SHOULD HAVE PARAMOUNTCY. END SUMMARY.

2. WE HAVE BEEN STRUCK IN RECENT WEEKS BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO GIVE AN INDICATION OF FORWARD MOVEMENT IN OSTPOLITIK. BAHR VISITED MOSCOW IN EARLY CONFIDENTIAL

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MARCH, MET WITH BREZHNEV AND GROMYKO AND CAME AWAY WITH WHAT HE THOUGHT WERE SOME POSITIVE RESULTS ON A FEW BERLIN ISSUES (BONN 3948). SCHEEL HAS JUST VISITED SOFIA, APPARENTLY IN A MOST FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE--THE FIRST FRG FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT BULGARIA SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II. HE WILL MAKE THE SAME SORT OF TRIP TO BUDAPEST IN A FEW WEEKS. EVEN THE HARDLINING GDR CAME THROUGH QUICKLY IN MARCH WITH AN AGREEMENT ON THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT MISSIONS. THE GDR HAS-
ALSO BEGUN TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY ON A SERIES OF
BILATERAL AGREEMENTS (POST, HEALTH) AND TO GIVE SOME
SIGNS OF REASONABLENESS IN THE INNER-GERMAN RELATION-
SHIP. FINALLY, THE SOVIETS THEMSELVES MADE A MAJOR MOVE
IN LATE MARCH (BONN 4617) IN AGREEING GENERALLY TO FRG
TERMS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE KURSK STEEL COMPLEX,
AFTER HAGGLING FOR MONTHS ON THE SUBJECT.

3. THE INITIAL IMPRESSION IS, THEREFORE, THAT
OSTPOLITIK HAS ONCE AGAIN BEGUN TO REGAIN THE MOMENTUM
IT LOST IN 1973 AND EARLY 1974. THIS IS CERTAINLY THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION, FOR IT NEEDS SOME SIGNS
OF SUCCESS FOR DOMESTIC REASONS AT THIS POINT. THERE
ARE OBSERVERS IN BONN (NOT ALL IN OPPOSITION CIRCLES)
WHO BELIEVE THAT THE SIGNS OF SWEET REASONABLENESS ON
THE PART OF THE EAST ARE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE A POSITIVE
IMAGE FOR THE FRG'S EASTERN POLICY AND THE BRANDT
GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS SUFFERED A LOSS OF POPULARITY AS
WELL AS LOSSES IN LOCAL AND STATE ELECTIONS IN PAST
WEEKS. THE SOVIETS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR WILLINGNESS
IN THE PAST TO HELP OUT BRANDT WHEN HE WAS IN DOMESTIC

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R 301017Z MAR 74

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BONN 05160

TROUBLE.

4. SEVERAL KNOWLEDGEABLE FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS HAVE ASSESSED THE SOVIET/EE PURPOSES AS OBVIOUSLY GOING BEYOND NARROW INTERESTS CONNECTED WITH THE FRG ALONE, ALTHOUGH THESE EXPERTS CONSIDER (PROBABLY CORRECTLY) THAT THE FRG REPRESENTS THE EAST'S MOST ATTRACTIVE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND SCIENTIFIC-TECHNOLOGICAL PARTNER IN WESTERN EUROPE. BUT THE SOVIETS ARE, IN THESE OFFICIALS' VIEW, ALSO INTERESTED IN TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE PRESENT STRAIN IN WEST EUROPE'S AND THE FRG'S RELATIONS WITH THE US, AND MAY BE USING THE CURRENT FORTHCOMING POSITIONS ON VARIOUS ISSUES TO FURTHER THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF DOING BUSINESS WITH THE EAST. IN EFFECT, THEY MAY BE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR PLAYING A SPOILER ROLE IN THE US-WEST EUROPEAN CONTEXT

AS WELL AS IN THE INTRA-EC FRAMEWORK.

5. WHATEVER THE APPEARANCES OF OSTPOLITIK PROGRESS AND WHATEVER THE MOTIVES FOR THE SOVIET/EE POSITIONS, OUR OWN EVALUATION IS THAT THE APPEARANCES ARE SOMEWHAT DECEIVING. THE SOVIETS, THE GDR AND THE OTHER EE'S HAVE MADE THEIR SMALL CONCESSIONS ONLY IN ORDER TO OBTAIN ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL OR OTHER CONCESSIONS' ON MORE BASIC QUESTIONS OF INTEREST TO THE FRG, THINGS ARE NOT GOING AT ALL WELL. BERLIN REMAINS A BONE OF CONTENTION, ADMITTEDLY SMALLER IN SCALE THAN BEFORE THE BERLIN AGREEMENT BUT STILL OF A DIMENSION TO CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. ETHNIC GERMANS ARE STILL NOT BEING ALLOWED TO EMIGRATE TO THE FRG FROM THE USSR, POLAND, AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN NUMBERS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS ACCEPTABLE. THE ISSUE OF REPARATIONS OR RESTITUTION TO VICTIMS OF NAZISM LOOMS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE BACKGROUND OF PRACTICALLY EVERY ECONOMIC#COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE FRG AND THE EE'S. THE GDR CONTINUES TO PRESS THE POLICY OF ABGRENZUNG (SEPARATION) AND THE PROSPECTS FOR ANY EARLY OR MEANINGFUL IMPROVEMENT IN THE FRG'S RELATIONS WITH EAST GERMANY SEEM BLEAK, EVEN IN THE ESTIMATION OF THE OSTPOLITIK'S CONCEPTUAL FATHER, EGON BAHR.

6. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS INCREASINGLY UNEASY ABOUT SOVIET/EE INTENTIONS IN CSCE AND MBFR. IN BOTH NEGOTIATIONS, THE EAST SEEMS INTENT ON HITTING HARD AT FRG INTERESTS, IN THE MATTER OF THE PEACEFUL CHANGE OF BORDERS IN THE CSCE CONTEXT AND IN REDUCING BUNDESWEHR TROOPS IN THE MBFR FIRST PHASE REDUCTION. WEST GERMAN OBSERVERS ARE BEGINNING TO WONDER WHAT OSTPOLITIK HAS ACTUALLY ACHIEVED, WHEN VIEWED AGAINST THE BURGEONING WARSAW PACT DEFENSE STRUCTURE IN EAST EUROPE.

7. MANY (AND AGAIN, NOT ALL OPPOSITION-ORIENTED) CONSIDER THAT THE FRG HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN CONVINCING THE EAST OF ITS NON-REVANCHIST INTENTIONS, AND HAS NOT HALTED OR REVERSED THE WIDENING DIVISION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST GERMANY, ALL THE FRG VISITORS TO THE GDR NOTWITHSTANDING. IF THESE GOALS HAVE NOT BEEN ACHIEVED, OR SHOW NO SIGNS OF EARLY ACHIEVEMENT, WHAT WAS OSTPOLITIK ALL ABOUT, IT IS BEING ASKED. THE ANSWER THAT OSTPOLITIK WAS AS MUCH A CLEANSING OF THE GERMAN CONSCIENCE AS A FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVE BASED ON NATIONAL INTEREST SEEMS TO LEAVE THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE TALK THESE DAYS FAIRLY COLD. THE DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE IN THE FRG IS SUCH THAT THE BULK OF THE

POPULATION IS NOW TOO YOUNG TO HAVE HAD ANY DIRECT EXPERIENCE WITH NAZISM AND WORLD WAR II; THEIR SENSE OF GUILT IS THEREFORE NOT STRONG ENOUGH, IF IT EXISTS AT ALL, FOR THEM TO FEEL THAT THE FRG HAS TO CONTINUE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO THE EAST BECAUSE OF THE BURDENS OF THE PAST.

8. THE BRANDT GOVERNMENT IS CERTAINLY AWARE OF THESE PROBLEMS. EVEN IF IT WERE NOT, THERE IS ALWAYS THE VOCAL OPPOSITION TO REMIND IT OF THEM. THE GOVERNMENT
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HAS BEEN SAVAGELY ATTACKED IN RECENT MONTHS ON THE MATTERS OF EXTENSION OF LOW-INTEREST, LONG-TERM CREDITS TO THE EAST BY THE CDU/CSU: IT HAS ALSO COME UNDER SHARP CRITICISM FOR ITS HANDLING OF THE PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TWO GERMANY'S PERMANENT MISSIONS.

9. IT IS POSSIBLE TO DETECT A CERTAIN DEFENSIVENESS ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS HANDLING OF EASTERN POLICY. BAHR, ALWAYS REGARDED BY LARGE SEGMENTS OF

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BONN 05160

GERMAN POLITICAL OPINION AS UNTRUSTWORTHY IN HIS
NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EAST, IS INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE
TO CHARGES OF HIS SELLING OUT FRG INTERESTS. PARTLY
FROM PERSONAL PREDILECTIONS AND PARTLY TO KEEP THE FDP
AT SOME DISTANCE FROM THE SPD IN THIS DELICATE AREA,
SCHEEL HAS AVOIDED GETTING INTO THE MIDST OF THE
OSTPOLITIK DEBATES; HE HAS FOCUSED MORE ON NON-CONTRO-
VERSIAL ASPECTS--SUCH AS THE VISITS TO BULGARIA AND
HUNGARY. THE OPPOSITION'S CONSTANT SNIPING, COMBINED
WITH THE EAST'S OWN AGGRESSIVE STUBBORNESS IN AREAS
OF KEY INTEREST TO THE FRG, SEEMS TO US TO BE LEADING
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TOWARD A MORE CAUTIOUS APPROACH

TO OSTPOLITIK. IT NOW APPEARS TO RECOGNIZE THE LIMITS OF WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH MOSCOW AND THE OTHER STATES. ECONOMIC COOPERATION WILL ALWAYS BE POSSIBLE-- AND SOMETIMES (AS IN THE CASE OF ENERGY) TO THE FRGS ADVANTAGE--BUT SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL PROBLEMS WILL REMAIN. THE LARGE QUESTION IN THE GERMAN MIND IS HOW FAR THE SOVIETS MAY BE PREPARED TO ALLOW POLITICAL ISSUES TO INTERFERE WITH ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND WITH THE SOVIETS' OWN WESTPOLITIK; THE OPTIMISTS IN BONN HOPE NOT TOO FAR. BUT THERE IS MORE UNCERTAINTY AS TO THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION THAN A YEAR OR SO AGO'

10. TO SUM UP, THE EASTERN POLICY OF THE FRG WILL CONTINUE AND MAY, ON THE SURFACE, EVEN APPEAR TO BE GOING WELL. BUT THE GAINS WILL NOT BE GREAT FOR THE GERMANS, THE SOVIETS AND EE'S WILL GIVE LITTLE AWAY ON BASIC POLITICAL QUESTIONS, AND WHAT LITTLE THEY DO GIVE WILL BE TIED TO FRG WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE CREDITS, ECONOMIC COOPERATION, ETC. THE FRG'S HANDS, HOWEVER, ARE NOT AS FREE IN THIS ECONOMIC AREA AS THEY USED TO BE. PARTLY FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS, PARTLY FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERNAL ECONOMIC REASONS, AND PARTLY FOR REASONS CONNECTED WITH ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US AND THE EC, IT WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO PROCEED MORE CAUTIOUSLY THAN BEFORE. THE BRANDT GOVERNMENT WILL BE SENSITIVE TO THE CHARGE THAT THE HEAVY FOCUS ON OSTPOLITIK HAS HARMED THE WEST'S COHESIVENESS. AND IT WILL BE CHARY ABOUT PROVIDING ANY FURTHER AMMUNITION FOR SUCH CHARGES AT THIS JUNCTURE IN US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE SOVIETS AND EE'S MAY BE DISAPPOINTED AND THAT THEIR READINESS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS MAY DIMINISH ACCORDINGLY. THE PROSPECTS ARE NOT ESPECIALLY PROMISING FOR BRANDT. ONE THING THAT MAY LIGHTEN THE PICTURE ARE SOVIET CONCESSIONS BASED ON THE DESIRE TO KEEP HIM IN OFFICE, BUT THERE ARE PROBABLY LIMITS TO SOVIET TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY EVEN IN THIS AREA.
HILLENBRAND

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